

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SSM-05 ACDA-10 AF-08
ARA-10 EA-09 /135 W
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P R 182205Z JAN 77
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2076
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 0129

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF
SUBJECT: SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM'S PRESS
CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SYG WALDHEIM MET WITH UN CORRESPONDENTS
JANUARY 17 TO DISCUSS HIS VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST DURING FIRST
TWO WEEKS OF FEBRUARY. FOLLOWING HIS STATEMENT, WALDHEIM
ANSWERED QUESTIONS DURING WHICH HE NOTED HE WAS CAUTIOUSLY
OPTIMISTIC WITH REGARD TO HIS TRIP. AFTERWARDS HE TOLD
REPORTERS HE PLANNED TO MEET WITH PLO CHIEF ARAFAT. END
SUMMARY.

2. WALDHEIM OPENED PRESS CONFERENCE WITH BRIEF PRESS
STATEMENT ON HIS VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST CAPTIALS, HIGHLIGHTS
AS FOLLOWS:
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-- IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WAYS BE FOUND TO RESUME
THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IT IS NOW MORE THAN THREE
YEARS SINCE THE SECURITY COUNCIL ADOPTED RESOLUTION
338 WHICH DECIDED THAT "IMMEDIATELY AND CONCURRENTLY
WITH THE CEASE-FIRE NEGOTIATIONS START BETWEEN THE
PARTIES CONCERNED UNDER APPROPRIATE AUSPICES AIMED

AT ESTABLISHING A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST." SINCE THAT TIME, MUCH EFFORT HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO THIS AIM, AND INTERIM AND DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS HAVE IN FACT BEEN NEGOTIATED ON TWO SECTORS OF CONFRONTATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

-- CIRCUMSTANCES ARE MORE FAVORABLE NOW FOR A RESUMPTION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS; THERE WOULD APPEAR ON ALL SIDES TO BE AN ACTIVE DESIRE TO FIND WAYS TO RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE DELAY.

-- THIS IS CONTEXT IN WHICH I HAVE DECIDED TO VISIT MIDDLE EAST IN FIRST HALF OF FEBRUARY. GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT IN LETTER SUGGESTED THAT I SHOULD ENTER INTO INTENSIVE CONTACT WITH ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED IN PREPARATION FOR THE CONVENING OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND, IN THIS CONNECTION, INVITED ME TO VISIT ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT. SINCE THAT TIME I HAVE CONSULTED WITH THE OTHER PARTIES PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED AND WITH THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND THERE IS A GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

-- I AM REQUIRED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO REPORT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN THIS REGARD NOT LATER THAN 1 MARCH 1977. THE CONVERSATIONS WHICH I SHALL HAVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGING VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE UNCLASSIFIED

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RECONVENING OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

-- I WISH TO ADD HERE I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS AT ALL ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF THIS TASK, BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS MY DUTY AS SYG TO DO ALL I CAN TO HELP ALL THOSE CONCERNED TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO RESUME THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

-- I SHALL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

-- I ALSO PROPOSE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT LEBANON WITH REGARD TO RELIEF AND REHABILITATION.

-- I PLAN TO BEGIN TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST IN EARLY FEBRUARY AND TO VISIT EGYPT, SYRIA, LEBANON, JORDAN, AND ISRAEL. I ESTIMATE THE TRIP WILL TAKE ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

3. FOLLOWING WALDHEIM'S DELIVERY OF STATEMENT, HE
REPLIED TO FIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

1. WILL THIS TRIP HAVE TO BE FOLLOWED BY MORE
VISITS TO MAKE THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE A REALITY
BEFORE MARCH?

A. I HAVE NOT DECIDED ON THAT QUESTION. I
WOULD RATHER CALL IT "CONSULTATIONS" THAN "SHUTTLE"
WHICH I DID NOT USE (WITH REFERENCE TO MAGAZINE
HEADLINE "WALDHEIM SHUTTLE."). IN FACT I DO NOT KNOW
WHETHER IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE A SHUTTLE OR TO
RETURN TO THE AREA AT A LATER STAGE. IF NECESSARY,
I WOULD NOT EXCLUDE IT - CERTAINLY NOT.....IF AT THE
END OF THE TWO WEEKS OF MAY STAY A RETURN TO ONE OR
THE OTHER COUNTRIES IS NECESSARY THEN I SHALL RETURN.

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Q. IN YOUR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CO-SPONSORS
DID YOU CONSULT WITH THE OUTGOING GOVERNMENT OR WITH
THE GOVERNMENT THAT WILL BE IN CHARGE FROM 20 JANUARY?

A. I HAVE HAD CONSULTATIONS WITH BOTH THE OUT-
GOING ADMINISTRATION AND THE INCOMING ONE. AS YOU MAY
REMEMBER, I DISCUSSED THE SITUATION WITH MR. KISSINGER
AS WELL AS WITH MR. CYRUS VANCE. ONLY LAST SATURDAY
I HAD A LONG TALK WITH THE AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE OF THE
UNITED STATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS, MR. ANDREW YOUNG.
WE EXTENSIVELY DISCUSSED MY TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST ON
THAT OCCASION TOO.

Q. ON OTHER GROUNDS, HOWEVER, THE TIMING OF YOUR
TRIP HAS RAISED SOME QUESTIONS, IN THAT YOU WILL BE
LEAVING ISRAEL JUST DAYS BEFORE A CONFERENCE OF THE
LABOR PARTY AT WHICH THE POTENTIAL NEW ISRAELI
LEADERSHIP WILL BE CHOSEN. ALSO, THE PALESTINIAN
NATIONAL COUNCIL IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE A FULL-SCALE
MEETING WITHIN A FEW WEEKS AFTER YOUR TRIP. I JUST
WONDER HOW YOU FEEL AT THIS PRECISE TIME AS TO
WHETHER YOU CAN ARRIVE AT ANYTHING LIKE A COMPRE-
HENSIVE OR AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF THE VIEWS OF
THE PARTIES WHEN THE PARTIES THEMSELVES, OR AT LEAST
TWO OF THEM, SEEM TO BE IN SUCH A STAGE OF FLUX.

A. WELL, OF COURSE THESE ARE ASPECTS THAT I HAVE
TO KEEP IN MIND. BUT IF WE ALWAYS ACCEPT REASONS WHY
WE COULD NOT RESUME THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS WE WOULD
NEVER RESUME IT.

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YOU ARE RIGHT IN SAYING THAT THERE WILL BE A
CONGRESS OF THE LABOR PARTY IN ISRAEL AND A MEETING OF
THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL IN CAIRO TOWARDS THE
END OF FEBRUARY, BUT I DO NOT REALLY THINK THAT WE CAN
MAKE OUR DECISION TO START CONSULTATIONS DEPENDENT ON
THESE MEETINGS. AS I SAID BEFORE, IF IT SHOULD BE
NECESSARY I WOULD BE QUITE READY TO RETURN TO THE AREA
AFTER THOSE EVENTS TOOK PLACE. BUT NOW I DO FEEL THAT IT
IS MY DUTY TO GO AHEAD. DO NOT FORGET THAT I HAVE TO
REPORT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON 1 MARCH, AND THIS IS
ALSO SOMETHING THAT I MUST KEEP IN MIND. I CAN ONLY
SUBMIT A USEFUL REPORT IF I HAVE BEEN TO THE AREA AND
HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH THE PARTIES
CONCERNED.

Q. MR. SECRETARY-GENERAL, AS YOU ARE WELL
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AWARE, THERE HAS BEEN A FAIR AMOUNT OF OPTIMISM EXPRESSED OVER THE CHANCES FOR THE POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA TALKS THIS TIME--SOMETIME LATE THIS SPRING. I GUESS MY QUESTION IS THE CONVERSE OF THE QUESTION ASKED A MOMENT AGO--THAT IS, WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS OF THOSE CHANCES THIS TIME THAT WERE NOT THERE, SAY, A YEAR AGO, WHEN THE RECONVENING WAS NOT ATTEMPTED?

A. FIRST OF ALL, LET ME REPEAT THAT I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT MY MISSION AND THE CHANCES OF RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. IT WOULD BE THE WORST WE COULD DO TO BE OVER-OPTIMISTIC.

I AM CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES. THE REASONS ARE SEVERAL--ONE OF THEM, FOR INSTANCE, CONCERNS LEBANON. THE FIGHTING HAS BEEN STOPPED AND THE NEW PRESIDENT AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT ARE TRYING TO RESTORE ORDER AND STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY. THAT IS ONE ASPECT.

THE OTHER IS THE NUMEROUS INTER-ARAB CONTACTS. ALMOST EVERY DAY THERE IS SOME MEETING SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ARAB LEADERS. THE DIVISION WHICH HAD EXISTED IS DISAPPEARING PROGRESSIVELY; LEADERS WHO HAD OPPOSED EACH OTHER ARE NOW GETTING TOGETHER, TRYING TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES AND TO WORK OUT THE BASIS FOR THE FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

AND FINALLY, IN ISRAEL ITSELF THERE IS A STRONG TENDENCY IN FAVOR OF THE RESUMPTION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE. THE QUESTION IS: WHAT ARE THE MODALITIES FOR RECONVENING THE CONFERENCE? UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS CAN THE CONFERENCE BE RECONVENED? WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A CONFERENCE? AND THAT IS UNCLASSIFIED

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EXACTLY WHY I AM GOING TO THE AREA--TO TRY TO CLARIFY THESE POINTS.

Q. MR. SECRETARY-GENERAL, IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR VERY, VERY RECENT EXPRESSION OF DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE GREAT INCREASE IN ARMS SALES--IN FACT, AUSTRIA IS REPORTED TODAY TO BE SEEKING OFFENSIVE ARMS--IN THE COUNTRIES WHICH YOU WILL BE VISITING, WILL YOU RAISE THIS QUESTION OF ARMS SHIPMENTS WHICH CONTINUE TO POUR INTO ALL THOSE COUNTRIES?

A. THAT IS NOT THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT. AS I

MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR, THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT IS TO SOUND OUT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, BUT I DO NOT HIDE FROM YOU THAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE INFLUX OF ARMS INTO THAT AREA, AND THAT IS CERTAINLY A DANGEROUS DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL NOT BE HELPFUL TO OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. I THEREFORE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

4. AS WALDHEIM LEFT THE CONFERENCE HALL, REPORTERS ASKED HIM WHETHER HE PLANNED TO MEET WITH PLO LEADER ARAFAT DURING HIS TRIP. WALDHEIM REPLIED THAT HE WILL BE MEETING WITH ARAFAT, BUT THAT THE SITE AND DATE OF THE MEETING HAD NOT YET BEEN ARRANGED.

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